

The Social Science Bulletin

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"I think th' country is goin' to the
divvle," said Mr. Hinnissy, sadly.

"Hinnissy," said Mr. Dooley, "if that
is so, I congratulate th' world."

"How's that?" asked Hinnissy.

"Well," said Mr. Dooley, "f'r nearly
forty years I've seen this country goin',
to the divvle, an' I got aboard late. An'
if it's been goin' that long an' at that
rate, an' has got no nearer thin it is
this pleasant Christmas, thin the divvle
is a divvle iv a ways further off thin
I feared."

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE BULLETIN

Volume II, No. 5

State College, Miss.

December, 1949

The Rural South as Seen in Two of its Institutions: The Country Store and the Rural Weekly

by

T. D. Clark

University of Kentucky

(NOTE: The following paper was read by Dr. Clark before the Social Science Round Table at Mississippi State College on Dec. 5, 1949. The address was sponsored by the History & Government Department)

The field of Southern social and economic history is an extremely broad one. It covers a multitude of human activities. Many of these, of course, are no different from those of other sections. Certainly the humanity of one region differs little from that of another, but the responses which people have made to their economic and social backgrounds do vary. It is not my purpose here, or at any other time, to attempt to define specifically what is meant by the term "common man," yet I think it not unsafe to proceed on the assumption that most Southerners are common men. By the same token it is safe to assume that many of the institutions which have served Southerners have at the same time served the common folk of the region. Generally it may be said that the people of the South are sentimental and they build up warm attachments for their institutions.

None of these institutions has played a more important role than the country store. It would be hard to find a rural son over forty years of age who cannot recall with genuine nostalgia the smell of oranges, peppermint candy, new horse collars, axle grease, stale tobacco, glazing on cheap cloth, lard, kerosene and all the other multitude of smelly articles which filled the disorderly shelves of the stores where they traded. In fact, the country store has become a symbol of the "good old days." Within the last thirty days the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey distributed its annual report for 1948, and on its cover is a colored reproduction of Melbourne Brindle's version of the country store.

There has always existed a feeling that the country store was in fact a philosopher's stone where all current issues were settled; where news was passed around, where visionary crops were planted, worked and sold; and where political issues were settled. Likewise, it was a meeting ground for checker players, horse-shoe pitchers and whittlers. These are the aspects of the country store which have been spread wholesale on the face of calendars, in the movies, and in Sunday supplements. The real Southern country store, however, lay hidden beneath a pile of uninviting ledgers, invoices and day books. Too, in the South the store as an institution was more or less distinctive. It has all of the sentimental aspects plus the much more serious ones of being the core of much of the region's economic activities. Even yet, despite the publication of Lewis Atherton's fine study of the Southern merchant prior to 1860, the true picture of the role of the country merchant in the Old South is not precisely clear. He existed, and he was no doubt important, but how did he fit into the factorage system over the whole region? This is an unanswered question.

In the period following the Civil War the country storekeeper adopted the title "general merchant," and he declared himself to be in the business of furnishing supplies to his agrarian neighbors. The farming system itself had undergone marked changes in some areas where substantial shifts were made from large scale to small scale operation, and from master-slave relationship to landlord-tenant agreements. Forty acres of land and a generously beribbed mule came to symbolize much of the South's agriculture. The old cotton factor was either ruined in the war, or because of the failure of the antebellum plantation system, had ceased trading. Thus it was that the furnishing merchant became important. He built his store convenient to his trade, accepted produce in lieu of money, and opened credit channels to bankrupt neighbors.

This was not done, however, without help from state legislatures. In that brief interim period following the war before the radicals moved into the statehouses, native Southerners foresaw an immediate need for a new credit device and passed the agricultural lien laws. In some respects these laws were the most remarkable pieces of legislation ever passed by Southern lawmakers. It is not likely that a single legislator looked beyond the immediate procurement of credit. Here it should be said that the legislature wished to procure credit from outside the region. The lien laws were not especially new to the South nor was their application novel. What was significant though was the wide scale application of this principle of agricultural credit. Stores went up at every likely crossroads. Native sons who had gone into the more dignified professions of law, medicine, and the ministry now found storekeeping an attractive calling. This was largely true because storekeeping was so closely connected with the system of planting. A man could be a planter and a storekeeper, too, and in this way he suffered no sentimental break with the past. It was not always true that the individual himself made the decision to become a storekeeper. Often he was selected by distributing firms from the large supply cities and placed in business. This particular procedure reflected three significant facts: competition in the postwar years for business was much greater; the South was a fairly promising market; and extra-regional capitalism was being channeled southward in a subtle form.

There was a wide gap between the poor, bedraggled, hill cotton farmer of Mississippi who lumbered home aboard a rickety cotton wagon drawn by gaunt mules taking a scanty supply of weekly rations and the money changers in Wall Street. Yet they each stood at the extreme ends of a peculiar financial system by which one exploited the other. No adequate study has been made of this vital question or extra-regional financing, yet I am sure that it is one of the most vital subjects to tackle in explaining much of the South's post war social and economic history.

It is hardly true that the storekeeper and his creditors forced the Southern cotton farmer into the so-called one-crop system. They helped, of course, and their modus operandi of business was so organized as to serve the prevailing planting system. Some writers have conceived the Southern farmer, be he tenant or owner, as so ravenously hungry that had he planted anything but cotton and tobacco he would have eaten it up before he could get it to market. This is a fallacious view. Cotton was popular for many reasons. "Pap growed cotton, and damned if I ain't too!" is one lucid reason for its popularity. Land types, seasons, labor and market facilities were adjusted to its production. Cotton could be grown by careless hands, it could be picked, housed, ginned, and marketed and stored without special facilities. It required no special care in any of these operations so long as it was kept reasonably clean and dry. It was not necessary to construct expensive warehouses, provide refrigerator cars in which to haul it, or to meet any appreciable competition in marketing it. Tobacco has almost the same cropping and market characteristics, except it takes some more care in preparing it for market.

Cotton planting became almost a folk matter in the South. Buying at the store on a credit, selling the cotton crop in a highly competitive price season, coming out behind and getting ready for the next growing season, became an exhausting lifetime routine for hordes of Southerners. The store about which they grew both sentimental and frightened was a source of supply. In the field of diet alone, stores carried the famous three of the debilitating food supply of the region. Invoice books show endless train loads of meat, meal, and molasses rolling up to store doors. This, however, is not enough to establish more than the fact that the South was importing large quantities of these supplies. The ledger books in their monotonous entries of the staple items in long columns, as yearly accounts, tell the important social story of diet. Behind the ledgers are the literally millions of little order slips written on nondescript pieces of paper. These recite obiter dictum a human story rich at once in pathos and comedy. They document eloquently the real facts of the South's furnishing system in simple, and more often illiterate language.

While it is true that meat, meal and molasses moved over store counters in an endless stream in the South prior to 1930, neither the system of merchandising nor cropping was responsible for much of this dietary error. Until the advent of the automobile much of the South remained in a backwoods, if not a purely frontier condition. Desire for salted meat, cornbread, biscuits and molasses was long a tradition. Wherever the American backwoodsman went he took this taste with him. Not until pellagra and other dietary diseases, arising from vitamin deficiencies struck them down did many Southerners take scientific food seriously. Even then they gave up their traditional dishes with great reluctance.

Closely akin to the matter of food supplies was that of medication. Never in the South's history has it had an adequate supply of medical personnel, and many sections got along without any medical aid at all. Folk remedies and patent medicines made up for a lack of capable doctors. The former were simple and nauseating; the latter were relatively expensive and ineffective. Over the same counter which passed staple supplies also came the medicines. In that wild freebooting age after 1865 when laissez faire business was a reality, almost every man with a jug of alcohol and an herb pot was able to go into the patent medicine business. Almost an endless procession of opium and alcohol-laden remedies found their way to the drug shelves to sit alongside gum opium, laudanum and morphine, which were handed out indiscriminately to the daily trade. The amounts purchased were governed solely by the amounts of money customers wished to spend.

Barn walls, fences, trees and even church buildings were covered with advertisements proclaiming the virtues of myriad chill tonics, female regulators, teething remedies, purgatives and sedatives. The Chattanooga Medicine Company alone used enough black and yellow paint advertising Black Draught and Wine of Cardui to paint a broad circle around the globe. Once Adolph Ochs had been president of this company, and in its more productive years the staunch Methodists, John Patton and family, helped to purge the South, ease maidens into puberty and make advanced matronhood a joy. Their calendars enabled Southerners to keep track of the days and months, the Lady's Birthday Almanacs pre-judged the weather, and the medicine memorandum books greatly facilitated the furnishing trade by supplying blank paper on which to write notes to merchants. Of all the liver regulators which were offered the public to help correct dietary deficiencies and at the same time supply a little heartwarming medicinal toddy, Simmons' Liver Regulator was most original in its claims. For the benefit of people in a land where folks talked dry and drank wet the advertisements read: "A man with a pure stomach, a clear skin and unclouded brain has no desire to be a drunkard. Simmons' Liver Regulator produces this effect by arousing the torpid digestive organs to healthy action, counterbalancing the desire for more drink, thus promoting the cause of temperance in an effective manner."

Ledger books tell the long and sordid story of the South's social need in their revelation of medicine sales. At the same time, they record a pitiful record of man's departure of this life. Accounts were brought to an end with entries for materials for shrouds and coffin fixtures. The same scissors which ripped off measures of piece goods for swaddling clothes cut longer measures for shrouds and coffin linings. Neighbors hammered away into the night to make coffins for the dead, while others slashed graves in tight clay hillsides to receive the bodies. Birth involved the credit system, and death often left its accounts unsettled.

It was a hard system of life outlined by the highly restrictive terms of the credit furnishing methods under the Southern lien laws. It made poor men, poor mules, and possibly worst of all, poor land. Novelists, sociologists, social crusaders, economic and social historians and politicians have all upbraided the system. The literature relating to the Southern method of agricultural credit and supply is voluminous. Most of it is highly critical and much of it is even scornful of the wrongness of the severe conditions. Merchants, farmers, editors, preachers and politicians all bemoaned it. Men like Henry W. Grady, Henry Watterson, Major W. W. Screws and many other critics were vivid in their abuse of it. Grangers, Farmers, Alliancemen, and Populists published reams of pleas for changes in the Southern way of life. But none of these was more descriptive than that nameless philosopher who took an earthy view of the hard terms of much of Southern life when he wrote of the affinity between a Southern cotton farmer and his mule.

Over a hill trailed a man behind a mule drawing a plow. Unexpectedly the plow hit a root, the mule stopped, and the man began to grumble as he fixed the hames: "Bill, you are just a mule, the son of a jackass, and I am a man made in the image of God. Yet here we work hitched up together year after year. I often wonder if you work for me or I work for you. Verily, I think it is a partnership between a mule and a fool, for surely I work as hard as you, if not harder. Plowing or cultivating we cover the same distance, but you do it on four legs and I on two, therefore I do twice as much as you.

Soon we will be preparing for a corn crop. When the corn is harvested I give one-third to the landlord for being so kind as to let me use a small speck of God's earth. One-third goes to you, the rest is mine. You consume all your portion, while I divide mine among seven children, six hens, two ducks and a storekeeper. If we both need shoes, you get 'em. You are getting the best of me, and I ask you, is it fair for a mule, the son of a jackass, to swindle a man, the lord of creation, out of his substance?

Why, you only help to plow and cultivate the ground, and I alone must cut, shock, and husk the corn, while you look over the pasture fence and heehaw at me. All fall and most of the winter the whole family from baby up picks cotton to help raise enough money to pay taxes and buy a new set of harness and pay the mortgage on you. Not a thing, you or-nery cuss, do you have to do. I even have to do the worrying about the mortgage on your tough, ungrateful hide.

About the only time I am your better is on election day, for I can vote and you can't. After election I realize that I was fully as big a jackass as your papa. Verily, I am prone to wonder if politics were made for a man or a jackass, or to make jackasses out of men.

And that ain't all, Bill, when you are dead, that's supposed to be the end of you. But me? The preacher tells me that when I die I may go to hell forever. That is, Bill, if I don't do just as they say. And most of what they say keeps me from getting any fun out of life.

Tell me, William, considering these things, how can you keep a straight face and still look so dumb and solemn?

The stores stand today weatherbeaten and gray at their crossroads. Some of them have been left off of the new highways. Cash wages, federal and state farm legislation, crop diversification and many other factors have converted them into cash stores or closed their doors altogether. Their ledger books lie dusty and untouched with their chapters of intensely human social life buried beneath their scarred old leather covers. Education, improved transportation, chain store competition seeking quick cash profits, better banking facilities, industrialization and special legislation have brought the "good old days" of the stores to a close. The tight economic and social bands which restricted much of Southern life to a rigid pattern of bare necessity as a fruit of hard labor have been broken. We understand little of the impact of extra-regional capitalism; our facts concerning the wasteful years of agricultural life after the Civil War are badly muddled and inadequately presented. The storekeeper often stands convicted of being the chief exploiter of his neighbors. Perhaps he was in many cases, but in most instances he was only a part of the bigger system which functioned through and around him.

Where the store and the merchant reflected Southern social and economic life in its material aspects, that other institution of the common man, the country newspaper, portrayed him in his intimate and public relationships. Like the store, the country weekly underwent a material change during the war years. After 1865 it ceased to be solely a political voice promoting the welfare of parties and individual

candidates and became a community organ of information and opinion. As in the case of storekeeping, editorship beckoned to young men who formerly might have gone into one of the professions. Every county seat was a prospective home for at least one newspaper. Legal advertising and political printing often supplied sufficient income to encourage the founding of a paper. Again pressure from the outside was rather strong for the publication of numerous local papers. Newspaper unions, or syndicates, in Chicago, New York, St. Louis and other cities, sought customers for their wares.

Scarcely had the shooting war ceased with Appomattox, before ingenious printers had readyprint and boiler plate on the market. They were prepared either to supply two printed pages of paper with or without advertising for a nominal sum of money, or they would supply strips of metal plate ready to be put on the press to be printed. This enabled local shops to set up papers with some degree of mechanical ease, and it filled in the white spaces of paper left barren by a lack of news. It is necessary to say little more about the mechanics of the Southern country paper. Hand operated "Washington" and powerized drum presses ground out their weekly burdens at a leisurely pace.

These thousands of Southern country papers constitute a precious record of human activity. Perhaps there is no better door to the past in most communities than the local newspaper file. No researcher into Southern history can ignore this rich source. Unfortunately, files of these papers are so poorly bound and so carelessly kept that much of the record of Southern civilization is crumbling away to dust. The newspaper brought a certain amount of dignity to the common man. Seeing his name in the paper made even the reddest neck son of the region feel like somebody. A short slug of type, a smear of ink and a tiny space of paper were magic. Because of this fact commonplace news got into the paper, and with it a composite picture of everyday social life in the South.

At least seven major things constituted top news to the country paper subscriber. These were sickness, death, women, weather, calamity, crops and politics. Sickness was wonderful news because it had an element of continuity to it. If a subscriber remained ill for some time he supplied news by simply lying flat on his back. Especially were sick neighbors the delight of crossroads reporters, who took keen delight in making a thorough report of the condition of a patient's illnesses and his prospects of either getting well or getting worse. If he died, all the intimate details of his passing were given, and the reporter followed him to the graveside as a literal recorder of the facts as they occurred. Death was ghastly enough for both editor and reader to give it a tremendous amount of attention in the papers. No filler was more gripping than those which described in some way the horrors and mysteries of death. For example, literally hundreds of stories were published of persons being buried alive.

Weather was important to rural people. Cold, warmth, drought and wet spells all had their real meaning in the lives of the Southerner. A general weather chart can be made from the local columns of country newspapers, and human responses to weather changes are carefully noted.

No less attractive than was the weather, no subject was more fascinating than Southern woman. Editors had a difficult time making up their minds as to what kind of woman they liked. A good South Carolinian spoke for much of the editorial fraternity when he said he liked an old-fashioned girl in modern dress. He wanted her to get up early in the morning to help her mother in the kitchen. She had to be educated, but not so much as to take her away from her domestic duties, which included taking care of her baby brother without crying, "You horrid boy." When she went shopping she did not flirt with the men. She had to be as pretty as Venus, as demure as grandma, and at the same time healthy, robust and so old-fashioned that she kept no secrets from mama.

Not all Southern women were so naïve as to tell mama all, and those who did not were the ones who often made the most exciting news. Some of them ran away to get married, some even guided grooms to the altar at the point of papa's guns. Some did not reach the altar in time, and others were wholly indifferent as to whether or not they ever took a walk down the aisle. In the main, however, the Southern editor had a highly gallant attitude toward those women whom he considered decent. He

spoke of them figuratively with a hat-in-hand flourish, wrote of their place in the home, complimented them for their beauty, berated any society trying to do without them and often speculated on the best way to get along with a wife.

Changing social attitudes toward relations of the sexes caught many an old fashioned Southern editor off guard. He did a lot of talking and editorial whistling in the dark on how to kiss a girl, how to flirt with her, and how to string her along with nonsense and sweet palaver; but the average editor was unprepared for most changes in women's clothing styles. When the tight front dresses came in style in 1875 many an editor ran out the full length of his editorial chains like an infuriated bull dog on a leash. They felt that a woman's anatomical outline should be as securely hidden as a miser's gold. The tight, pin-back Victorian dresses of that period brought thunderous blasts of temper. The Negroes might be emancipated, but no publisher was going to work overtime to set Southern women free,—not if he were in his right mind. There was no objection to women slaving away their lives in the kitchen and at the hearthside, or bending over the wash tub down by the spring; but they had no business wearing callouses in their dainty little hand at the polls or in public jobs. Furthermore, they should stay from outside horses; but if they wished to take their lives in their hands in a side saddle that was a pure and virtuous thing.

When wedding bells rang, editors were on hand to report the grand affairs. Nowhere is the slowness with which Southerners abandoned the moonlight and roses tradition inspired by Sir Walter Scott demonstrated more abundantly than in the weekly newspaper reports of important local marriages. Sentimentality was a rule of the day, and anyone who violated the code was soundly scolded for his indiscretion. Women of the Confederacy were spoken of as angels who had sacrificed their own blood in four years of war. When an editor wished to stroke the sensitive strings of emotion he had only to introduce the subject of long-suffering women in the Lost Cause.

News of Southern woman flowed in steadily; it did not come with the suddenness and ferocity of local calamity. A fire that wiped out Main Street, a hurricane that cut a swath of death and destruction across the countryside, a flood or an epidemic sent typesetters rushing to their cases, and the screws of presses were soon turning down on long stories giving the details of disaster. The horrors of violent Southern hurricanes were reported over a large area of the South. Life was disrupted, families were bereft of members, and homes and property were scattered to the four winds. The suddenness of these storms made them extremely shocking and newsworthy.

Calamity made exciting reading material, and when editors were without genuine local stories, they either borrowed or made up good ones. Possibly one of the most famous folk stories afloat was that which described the sudden death of at least a half dozen people within the time scope of a few minutes, because of a combination of fatal circumstances. There was a distinctly morbid quality to the Southern rural mind following the Civil War; and apparently the more horrible a story was, the more news value it had. Minds starved for excitement were ready to absorb it in any form, but it was more delectable if it provoked anger, pity or fear.

Nowhere was the long-standing tradition of hospitality and neighborliness more ably recorded than in the pages of the country paper. At the same time, these papers contain one of the most sordid records of the disregard for the established legal institutions of the South. Stories of lynching, regulator and white cap activities, robbery, rape, arson and murder constitute a considerable volume of news. Postwar years as well as the first years of this century were marked by a tremendous amount of violence, which grew out of the combined conditions of Reconstruction and the Southern frontier spirit.

Agricultural news was a staple factor in the papers. This type of material was handled in several ways. Crossroads reporters wrote of the succeeding activities on the farm and the weather conditions affecting them. Special columns recorded the sale of livestock, reports on crop conditions, farm legislation and other pertinent matters. Editorially the papers attacked the South's staple crop system. They preached diversification, sought improved farm markets, condemned the impossible lien-law credit system, pleaded endlessly for farmers to live at home, and ran stories every year about men who were able to produce their own bread and meat. A good fruit orchard was given as much space as a medium-sized fire, and a good crop of wheat was a sensation.

Farming as a way of life was the theme of much editorial writing. Most editors came from the farm, or their ancestral roots were planted deeply there; so they sat atop their stools and grew lyrical over the joys of farming. To them there was no better way to begin a career than as a barefoot boy between the handles of a plow. They wrote long stories proclaiming the Southern farm boy as the sturdiest bit of manhood in America. He was said to be a symbol of American integrity, industry and initiative. His body was clean and strong, his mind was not befouled by the atmosphere of the city, his thoughts were upon the ethereal and idyllic things of life. In short, he knew what he wanted and how to go after it. Nevertheless, these flights of fancy were never so high that editors forgot the drabness and loneliness of the Southern farm. They did not always see the farm homes as moss or rose covered cottages beside dancing streams and shimmering meadows. They were well aware of the leaky roof, the thin walls, the insufficient water supply, the lack of sanitation, and the meager furnishings. All of this they hoped to remedy. But there was one false note in all of the editorial criticism of Southern agriculture: newspaper men preached reform without giving definite programs by which it might be accomplished.

In the field of agrarian reform editors were torn between extreme political conservatism (expressed in blind allegiance to the Democratic Party) and any program which might bring actual improvement of Southern life. Most of them tolerated the non-political Grange and damned violently the more politically-minded Alliance groups. Populism was synonymous with modern communism and its leaders were wild-eyed dreamers, fools and knaves. It is a remarkable fact that editors were close to their people, and they appear to have shared almost as a body the extreme reluctance of the Southern mind to make group changes. In all of their agitation for improved conditions of life in the South, not a handful of publishers saw that the real secret of making changes lay in undramatic but well-planned examples.

Civic-mindedness had a hard time being born in Southern towns and villages. Countrymen moved to town, but still wanted to be rugged and independent frontiersmen by allowing their livestock to run at large. Public wells, hitching racks, side-walks, private premises and public buildings were bespoiled as freely as woodlots and barnyards. People had to be taught long and tedious lessons of living together, both in close proximity and harmony. I could not estimate the miles of columns of print that were necessary to get hogs off the streets of Southern towns and to keep public wells clean, courthouses denuded of tobacco, and graveyards free of cows, hogs and honeysuckle.

Whatever the newspapers' role was in shaping attitudes toward progressive conditions of life and labor in the South, one thing is certain: no adequate human history of the region can be written until some patient scholar carefully digests the virginal source materials awaiting him in the files of store records and country papers. Both of these sources open scores of vistas of Southern life. Whatever approach may be made to the study, there is considerable evidence in these rich records to justify it. Perhaps one of the richest veins of Southern life and literature is that of folklore, or more particularly folk attitudes and ways. Such material exists in great abundances in these sources. Attitudes toward politics, immigration, religion, education and industrialization are often expressed with both vigor and clarity.

Our social historians of the South are few in number and somewhat timid when it comes to pioneering in the fields of the folk mind and everyday conditions of life in the South. Historians in general have been content to sit in libraries and wait for some one to bring in these new and widely dispersed sources. Tragically, too many of us are content to rake over the old ashes of the Civil War and Reconstruction and to neglect the numerous gaps in the broader fields of Southern history which are crying out for exploitation. The South has been an everyday land, and it is necessary to understand the everyday things to understand most of its history.

EXTRACTS AND ABSTRACTS

A History of Dairying in Oktibbeha County

by

Annie Ray Hammons.

(NOTE: Mrs. Hammons' study of the history of dairying in Oktibbeha County was completed in May 1948 in connection with her work for a M. S. degree in history at Mississippi State College. Mrs. Hammons is now residing in Raleigh, North Carolina, where her husband, who received his M. S. degree here at the same time as his wife, is pursuing his doctoral studies. In the next several issues extracts from Mrs. Hammons' study will be published. The first installment covers the beginnings of dairying in Oktibbeha County.)

Part I. The Beginnings

Oktibbeha County has been called the "dairy center of the South," and rightly so. There are many reasons why this particular county is so well adapted to the dairy business. These factors were recognized by such early leaders as W. B. Montgomery and Professor J. S. Moore. For dairying to succeed in any county, there must be the soil necessary for growing the desired grasses and abundant rainfall, plus a desire on the part of the people for the industry.

The basis for Oktibbeha's exceptional advantages in the dairy business is a soil that is rich in lime, potash, and phosphorus; the adaptability of this soil for the growing of grasses and leguminous crops; the mild temperatures; the long growing season; and the foresight of some of the early leaders to recognize these advantages.

Colonel W. B. Montgomery (1829-1904) was the father of dairying in the county. He imported Jersey cattle from the Isle of Jersey as early as 1860; he operated a 10,000-acre plantation with a dairy herd of over 200 cows; he was instrumental in establishing the Mississippi A. & M. College at Starkville; he served as a member of the Board of Trustees for that institution for over twenty years; he founded the Southern Livestock Journal in 1875; and he was continually urging the farmers to utilize the abundant prairie grasses rather than curse them as a cotton pest.

Oktibbeha County is a part of the Northeast Prairie section of Mississippi. Before the Civil War, and long afterwards, this section was noted for its great cotton plantations. In the period 1900-1920 a radical change occurred. The boll weevil made its appearance, and with the expansion of the Delta as a cotton area, this county was left in a secondary rank as far as cotton growing. Cotton dropped from 12,442 bales in 1900 to 3,739 bales in 1920, with the population declining from 20,183 to 16,872.

By 1915, the boll weevil had created such a crisis in cotton growing that the farmers began to heed the voices of those who had long advocated dairying as an industry in Oktibbeha County. Thus it was during the period 1908-1915, when the boll weevil was playing havoc with cotton production, that the dairy industry began to develop intensively within this area.

Already some steps had been taken toward dairy development. Colonel H. L. Muldrow was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Club by 1872 and was active in the dairy business. A. W. Halbert, who introduced the Brown Swiss into this county from Iowa, ran a dairy near Osborn and sold cream to a big drug firm in New Orleans. He also specialized in Red Polled Herefords and in November, 1903 he won the first prize of \$1,000 in cash at the International Livestock Show in Chicago with a Red Poll cow, Beatrice.

The Mississippi A.&M. College through the cooperation of its Experiment Station and Dairy Department pioneered with a successful creamery at the college. Also in September, 1912, the A.&M. College aided in the establishment of the Cooperative Creamery. Due however to the difficulties of establishing favorable marketing outlets and other factors, there was little commercial dairying within the county until after the second decade of the twentieth century.

There were other factors besides the boll weevil which "encouraged" the farmers to consider dairying. The Oktibbeha County Fair Association, which began in 1901, offered prizes for the best dairy cattle. In 1905, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture had an exhibit at the Lewis and Clark Exposition at Portland, Oregon, which included livestock exhibits. Animal exhibits also were shown in the Miss. & West Alabama Fair held at Columbus. Nothing aided more in the early development of agriculture, horticulture, and livestock resources than the "old-fashioned county and state fairs."

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RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL MEETING

The American Rural Sociological Society and the American Sociological Society will meet simultaneously in New York City from December 28 through 30. The meeting, which will occur at the same time as those of the American Economics Association and the American Political Science Association, will be attended by Dr. Harold Kaufman and Dr. Harald Pedersen from Mississippi State College.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

Dr. John K. Bettersworth and Dr. Glover Moore will attend the annual meeting of the American Historical Association which meets in Boston December 28 through 30. There will be group meetings of a number of special and regional societies, including the Southern Historical Association and the Mississippi Valley Association. Of particular interest will be a paper by Dr. T. D. Clark, who recently spoke at the Social Science Round Table here, entitled, "Virgins, Villains, and Varmints of Mr. Beadle's Frontier."

During the holidays Dr. Glover Moore will take advantage of the trip to Boston to do research at Boston and New York on the Missouri Controversy.

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

The American Political Science Association will hold its meeting in New York on December 28 through 30. Dr. Gordon K. Bryan, of the Department of History and Government, will attend the entire meeting and will serve as secretary for one of the group sessions. Dr. John K. Bettersworth will also attend a portion of this meeting.

DECEMBER ROUND TABLE MEETING WELL ATTENDED

The December meeting of the Social Science Round Table was held in the Stark Hotel at 6:30 P. M. on December 5. Dr. T. D. Clark was the guest speaker for the occasion. His paper, given under the sponsorship of the Department of History and Government, was very enthusiastically received, appears as the leading article in this Bulletin.

Quite a number of visitors from off the campus attended the meeting. Among these were: President and Mrs. B. L. Parkinson, of MSCW; Dr. Morgan L. Combs, President of Mary Washington College of Virginia; Dr. L. G. Painter, Professor emeritus of English at MSCW; and the following faculty members from MSCW: Professors Boyd, Poindexter, Bourne, Monks, Measamer, Wood, and Professor and Mrs. Skipper. Professor Hamby, of Wood Junior College, was also present. Mr. Henry Meyer, editor of the Starkville News, was a special guest. There was also a large delegation from the Library, the English department, the Modern Language department, the Education department, and the Experiment Station and Extension Service. Also present were Dean Brooks, Dean Flinsch, and Dean and Mrs. Weems. The total attendance for this session was around 90 persons. The continuing success of the Round Table idea is due to a large extent to the enthusiastic support of the friends of the Social Sciences here on our campus and to the encouragement we have received from our neighboring institutions.

HOOLE TO SPEAK AT NEXT ROUND TABLE MEETING

Dr. W. S. Hoole, Librarian of the University of Alabama, has consented to address the next meeting of the Social Science Round Table, which will occur on Monday evening, February 6, 1950. Hoole has conducted extensive research in the field of American folk humor, and his subject, details of which will be announced in the next Bulletin, will be concerned with some of the social aspects of American humor. Dr. Hoole's address will be sponsored by the Library, and Mr. Donald Thompson, Director of Libraries, is preparing the program for the February meeting.

McMILLEN TO RETURN TO CAMPUS NEXT SEMESTER

Professor Francis V. McMillen, who has been on leave during the fall at the University of Texas, has completed his doctoral studies and will have his dissertation ready in time to receive his degree in June. He will return to the campus at the end of January in time to resume his teaching program next semester.

SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

The "Conference on Education for Social Work," which was held on the campus of Mississippi State College on December 2-3, under the sponsorship of the Division of Sociology and Rural Life, was both well attended and successful. Nearly 50 persons were in attendance from various parts of the state and a large number of students and local faculty participated.

At this meeting a movement was set on foot to create a section for college students and teachers as part of the Mississippi Conference of Social Welfare. The idea is that this section will replace the sort of conference just held here.

However, the American Association of Social Workers is expected to continue to foster cooperation between professional social workers and sociology professors in working out a curriculum for pre-professional training. Dr. Vernon L. Wharton, professor of sociology at Millsaps College and president of the Mississippi Conference of Social Welfare, was present at the conference and approved of this arrangement.

At the conference Dr. Kaufman conducted a stimulating panel discussion on various social problems in the fields of health, crime, poverty, and rural community problems. Others participating in this panel were Dr. Harald A. Pedersen, assistant professor of sociology, division of sociology and rural life, Mississippi State College; Miss Mary Walker Mahon, child welfare supervisor, State Department of Public Welfare; Dr. Alfred C. Schnur, assistant professor of sociology, University of Mississippi; Dr. Arthur Raper, division of farm population and rural life, Bureau of Agricultural Economics; Dr. D. V. Galloway, executive director of Mississippi Hospital Commission; and Miss Jewell Garland, Extension Service, Mississippi State College.

Miss Myrtle Mason, executive secretary of the Family Service Association, Jackson, conducted a very stimulating discussion for college students on the various fields of social work, and the opportunities for employment and graduate study in social work. A total of forty-five students came from the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State College for Women, Millsaps College, Blue Mountain College, and Mississippi State College to this meeting.

Dr. William P. Carter, professor of sociology and rural life, Mississippi State College, led a discussion of methods of teaching the "Introduction to Social Work" course. Miss Lucille Russ, director of education and organization of the Mississippi Division of the American Cancer Society, conducted an interesting discussion of "Opportunities for Social Work Education in Public Health."

Forty-five conference members and their guests enjoyed a fine tenderloin steak dinner at the College Grill Friday evening. Mrs. William P. Carter, Mrs. Harold Kaufman, and Mrs. Howard Nicely made arrangements for the dinner. Ben Hilbun, administrative assistant to the president, gave a hearty welcoming speech.

PEDERSEN SPEAKS TO CAMPUS FARM ECONOMICS GROUP

Dr. Harald Pedersen spoke on December 5 to the Mississippi State College chapter of the American Farm Economics Association Student Group on the subject, "Farm Population Shift."

FULBRIGHT DEADLINE EXTENDED; SOCIAL WORK OPENINGS AVAILABLE

Dr. John K. Bettersworth, Fulbright representative for Mississippi State College, has received word that the deadline on applications for university teaching and advanced research grants has been extended to December 31 for the following countries: Burma, Greece, Italy, the Philippines, and the British colonial dependencies.

Of a special interest is the opening up of special category awards for social workers in the United Kingdom in connection with the Joint Universities Council for Social Studies.

BETTERS WORTH TO SPEAK AT DEDICATION OF TWO COAST MARKERS

On January 11, Dr. John K. Bettersworth, head of the Department of History and Government, will speak at ceremonies in connection with the dedication of historical markers for Beauvoir and the city of Biloxi.

CHRISTIAN ATTENDS MARKETING MEETING

Professor W. E. Christian, of the Agricultural Economics Department, will attend a meeting in Memphis, Dec. 16-17, of the Regional Livestock project.

WATSON TO SPEAK AT WOOD JUNIOR COLLEGE

Professor Robert Watson, of the Department of History and Government, has been invited to be guest speaker at the International Relations Club of Wood Junior College. Mr. Watson's address, which will be delivered in January, is entitled, "The International Relations of Russia."

KAUFMAN ATTENDS MEETING ON HEALTH STUDY

Dr. Harold Kaufman, head of the division of sociology and rural life, will attend a research conference at Washington during the holidays in connection with the health study now under way in Mississippi. He will confer with representatives from Cornell University and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

HOLLADAY SPEAKS TO LOCAL AAUP GROUP

Dr. James Holladay, of the University of Alabama, who spoke before the Social Science Round Table in October, will be the guest of the State College chapter of the American Association of University Professors on Wednesday, December 14. His address will be, "Functions and Organization of the AAUP." This is the regular December meeting of the chapter. Dr. Holladay's address will be given at 7 P. M. in the YMCA auditorium.

RURAL CHURCH GROUP HOLDS PLANNING SESSION

The Rural Church and Community Planning Committee, which has the responsibility of preparing the program of the Church and Community section of Farm and Home Week here next summer, will hold a special conference on Thursday, December 15 in the YMCA.

BETTERSWORTH SPEAKS TO "Y" LUNCHEONS

Dr. John K. Bettersworth spoke on the Mississippi historical marker program at the Sophomore and Junior YMCA luncheons December 7th and 8th.

RIVERS' COURSES

Latest intelligence from Durham is that Dorris Rivers, assistant professor of Sociology at Mississippi State, has settled down in a five-room house and is busily engaged in his doctoral studies. He is taking two courses in research methods, one of them under the well known specialist, Dr. Hornell Hart. Professor Rivers is also engaged in a seminar project involving two problems: (1) a statistical analysis of a particular situation (2) an analysis of factors which are conducive to and which retard the dissemination of research findings in agriculture. In this latter project Rivers is engaged in work that is directly in line with his research program at Mississippi State.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE BULLETIN

The current issue rounds out the first year of publication of the Social Science Bulletin. Beginning modestly in December, 1948 as a three-page digest of campus news in the Social Sciences, the Bulletin has grown until it now includes articles, research abstracts, and items of general Social Science interest. In November the Bulletin, with seventeen pages, reached its maximum size for the year. Circulation has likewise grown. At the start only seventy-five copies were run off. Two hundred and forty is the total run of the current issue. Circulation off the campus has grown rapidly, as requests to be placed on the mailing list have increased month after month. Now, all we want for Christmas is a Varitype machine!

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Two articles originally scheduled for this issue have been deferred until later. The article on the beginnings of the agricultural course at old A. & M. will appear in February. The study of the curriculum in the Social Sciences for 1950-1951 will be expanded into a special edition of the Bulletin for January, which will be in the form of a brochure for circulation among prospective students who desire to major in a Social Science field at Mississippi State, either graduate or undergraduate.